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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQ: POTENTIAL PROGRESS ON FRANCE'S GENDARME  
TRAINING OFFER

Classified By: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, REASON  
1.4 B AND D

1. C) During the course of a meeting with MOD contacts on May 13, we learned that Iraq has responded to France's bilateral offer to train Iraqi security forces, which President Chirac had conveyed to then IIG President Yawer last January. According to Captain Devaux, a MOD desk officer for NATO issues, including the Iraq training mission, the Iraqis responded late April/early May with an extensive and detailed wishlist for training. Iraq is seeking help in all areas, with criminal investigation and border controls cited as two examples. While the French think the list is too long, the MOD said it is looking at it "favorably." According to Devaux, an Iraqi delegation of technical experts is expected in France in June to discuss the request with the French.

2. (C) MFA DAS-equivalent director for the Middle East Antoine Sivan confirmed to us the Iraqi response, but was more cautious over the next steps. He noted that while the initial Iraqi response was positive, there was still a long way to go. He said it was important that the Iraqi team be autonomous and authorized to make decisions; the GoF also hoped the Iraqis could narrow down their list of 20 or so demands to three to four priority areas. Sivan was unaware of the planned travel in June of Iraqi experts. He did note, however, that the GoF was still waiting for the Iraqis to confirm when their team would come.

3. (C) France is looking to move forward on its original training offer at various sites in France. This initial GoF proposal reportedly called for training in France of about 30 senior Iraqi gendarmes, who would then train up to 1,800 Iraqi police at a future training center in Qatar. In discussing the Qatar training center, Devaux explained that it would have a regional focus. In line with existing bilateral agreements with Qatar, the French and Qataris envision training security personnel from throughout the Gulf region at the future Qatari center. The MOD does not expect it to be up and running until 2006, however.

4. (C) The bilateral French training offer is separate from France's plan to train some 175 police and 30 judges in France in summer and fall 2005 as part of the EU's "JUSTLEX" program. (Note: The French pledge to train some 200 Iraqis would place France near the top of the EU contributor list to the JUSTLEX program.)

5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
WOLFF